

Longfield (Gibson House)  
1200 Hope Street  
Bristol  
Bristol County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-129

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1-15-63  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

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## LONGFIELD (Gibson House)

Location: 1200 Hope Street  
Bristol, Rhode Island  
Latitude: 41° 41' 49.23"N  
Longitude: 71° 16' 46.61"W

PresentOwner &

Occupant: Mrs. Margaret Stewart and children

Present Use: Residence

Significance: Longfield was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in May of 1972. Longfield is significant as a notable and picturesque site and house in Bristol's outskirts. It is a very good and only slightly altered example of Gothic Revival architecture interpreted in wood. Longfield is also known for its designer, Russell Warren and for its initial and continued association with the DeWolf, Gibson and Knowlton families.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATIONA. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Circa 1848
2. Architect: Longfield was designed by Russell Warren (1783-1860), who was a figure of more than local importance. Rhode Island-born and self-educated, Warren's work spanned six decades. Warren began his work in Bristol, working chiefly for members of the DeWolf family. He also worked in Providence, Warren, and Newport, Rhode Island, and in Fall River and New Bedford in Massachusetts. He also did work in Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. In the mid-1830's he spent a year in New York with the noted firm of Town and Davis, where he acquired an understanding of the Gothic Revival style which he later applied at Longfield.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Part of Longfield's importance stems from its ownership.  
  
1848: Sixty acres of DeWolf land is given to Charles Dana Gibson as a wedding present upon his marriage to Abbey DeWolf. Gibson then built Longfield on this land for his new bride.

- 1867: grantor: Charles Dana Gibson (by will)  
grantee: Abbey DeWolf Gibson
- 1901: grantor: Abbey DeWolf Gibson (by will)  
grantee: Langdon Gibson  
Josephine Gibson  
Annie Gibson Hopkins
- 1915: grantor: Langdon Gibson (by will)  
grantee: Josephine Gibson Knowlton
- 1969: grantor: Josephine Gibson Knowlton (by will)  
grantee: Daniel Gibson Knowlton
- 1972: grantor: Daniel Gibson Knowlton  
grantee: Marcel R. Gladu  
Alvaro G. Correia
- 1977: grantor: Marcel R. Gladu  
Alvaro G. Correir  
grantee: Thomas H. Stewart  
Margaret S. Stewart

4. Alterations and additions: Changes made to the house have been relatively minor. About 1907, the original cut-out bargeboard trim was removed from the gables. The front porch was rebuilt with a steeper shingled roof and all its Gothic bracing was removed as were the wooden crockets. The Gothic window over the front porch may have had its sill-level raised. The south side porch was enlarged from a half-octagon shaped protrusion which was accessible from only the south parlor window. Its Gothic balustrade, bracing and parapet railing was kept. Exterior window blinds, original to the house, are stored in the attic. The rear entrance porch was totally rebuilt in 1963. The original partition in the front southwest bedroom which separated that room from a dressing room has been removed. Longfield originally had a wood-shingled roof and was painted light red with darker trim. The house at present is painted white with black trim.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The grandson of the builder of Longfield was the artist Charles Dana Gibson who graphically chronicled the "Gilded Age". His sister, Josephine, chatelaine of Longfield, was among his models for the still-remembered "Gibson Girl". Longfield was a center for social and artistic gatherings until Josephine's death in 1969. She has recorded the history of the house and the family in Longfield (1956) and in Butterballs and Finger Bowls (1960).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books, Bristol Town Hall Records, 1848-1977

National Register of Historic Places nomination form 10-300  
compiled by Lombard John Pozzi, Surveyor-Researcher and  
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Knowlton, Josephine Gibson: Longfield, The House on the Neck (Providence, Rhode Island 1956). Butterballs and Finger Bowls (Providence, Rhode Island, 1960).

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Longfield is a comparatively unaltered example of the American Gothic Revival style interpreted in wood. It is a good example of the Gothic "cottage" that was popular in the 1940s.
2. Condition of fabric: Longfield has been kept up very well over the years. There is being done at this point some basic up-keep maintenance work.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Its front portions measure 44' 4" across by 25' 6" deep, excluding the entrance porch; a 26' wide by 38' long wing at the rear gives the house an inverted "T" shape. Two later additions, a laundry room and a single-stall garage together measure 11' 6" across and 35' 0" deep. They are attached to the easternmost or rear elevation of the house.
2. Foundation: The foundation of the house is of stuccoed stone.
3. Wall construction: Wood clapboards
4. Porches: The south side porch was originally a much smaller version of what exists today. There is a later service porch on the north side and a modern porch/deck on the southeast elevation.

5. Chimneys: Longfield has four chimneys, the front two are symetrically placed with relation to the front facade. They are each capped by a cluster of four chimney-pots. The rear wing has two additional brick chimneys with Gothic stylization. The easternmost chimney is placed just within the end of the rear wing so that it does not project from the wall.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main doorway employs full-length sidelights, chamfered casings and a three-section transom above. Wooden labels are over all exterior doorways and windows of this house.
  - b. Windows: The first floor windows of the three main rooms are long casements with transoms above. The windows of the second floor are double hung. Above the front entrance are two joined, pointed Gothic windows with out-swinging casements. Of the six smaller attic windows only two are lancets. All attic windows have six-paned sashes.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape and Covering: The roof of Longfield is cross-gabled, consisting of four gables with an added fifth gable dormer facing south in the rear wing. The main roof is pierced with four chimneys. Its roof singles were originally wood.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. **First floor:** There is a spacious central hall with a wide main stair. It runs along the north wall, and has turned and carved walnut balusters and a molded handrail, above sawn brackets. At the left is a library, also called the north parlor. In this room is a mantle made of cast iron, other features are the door and window labels, which are similar to those of the exterior. Across the front hall, in the southwest corner of the house, is the south parlor. To the rear of this is the dining room. Both south parlor and dining room have Italianate marble fireplaces. Off the dining room is a small pantry which leads into the large kitchen which runs along the rear (eastern) section of the house. A back hall connects the front hall and kitchen areas, and in it are a service entrance and rear stair.
- b. **Second floor:** At the second floor level, the central hall joins the two front bedrooms, middle bedroom and back hall. At the end of this main hall is a large, double Gothic casement window opening onto the front porch roof.

Above the library is the master bedroom, and along the south side are three other bedrooms. In these rooms are displayed both Greek Revival and Gothic mantle, window and door trim.

c. Attic: Accessible from the rear stair, the attic story is basically unfurnished except for the two small bedrooms in the north and east gables and a bathroom.

2. Stairways: A wide main stairway runs along the north wall in the large central hall. There is a rear stair leading from the service entrance which is much narrower.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster is in all rooms, with heavy plaster cornices in the library, front hall and south parlor.
4. Doorways and doors: All interior doors are of the four-paneled variety.
5. Windows: The main rooms of the first floor have cappings with the same details seen on the exterior. Sliding into wall pockets, each of these windows can be screened by a single leaf louvered panel consisting of twelve sections. The louvers of the two centermost sections are operable.
6. Heating: There are seven fireplaces in Longfield. The fireplace in the easternmost bedroom has been removed. Mantles are Italianate marble, except the north parlor which employs cast iron, the master bedroom which has a newer wood mantle, and the kitchen which has a modern brick hearth.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Longfield acquired its name while under construction, as it was the house being built out in the "long field" that stretched down to Narragansett Bay. The house sits on its original site and faces west, somewhat set back from Hope Street. The original homestead built for Abbey DeWolf Gibson consisted of 60 acres. All of the varied out buildings have been moved or destroyed, although Longfield still remains an imposing and picturesque house on its tree shaded lot.

2. Outbuildings:

Possibly built as a caretaker's house, the cottage with Gothic trim at 1222 Hope Street originally stood nearer the rear of the property and was moved in 1882. A former milk-house was moved at the same time and joined to this cottage as a kitchen ell,

A handsome board-and-batten stable stood to the northeast of Longfield. It was a one-and-a-half story gabled structure. A huge two-and-a-half story barn has been demolished. The stable itself has been moved across the lane to a point east of Longfield, where it now stands.

Another small cottage, built nearby by F.H. DeWolf to house his servants, was moved to the rear of Longfield sometime prior to 1909. This plain one-and-a-half story gable-roofed structure served as the Knowlton residence until the completion of a new dwelling and then was demolished.

A stone barn also stood to the northeast of Longfield, where part of the original foundation may still be seen. The building was dismantled in 1910 and rebuilt in its present location, back from Hope Street. It is known as upper Longfield.

Prepared by Laura Barbeau  
Student Preservationist  
Roger Williams College  
December, 1979

### PART III PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by students in a group project in Historic Preservation at Roger Williams College in Bristol, Rhode Island, under the general supervision of John Burns, Architect for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The entire project encompassed four houses in Bristol designed by Russell Warren. Project directors were Dr. Kevin Jordan (Historic Preservationist) and Professor Americo Mallozzi (Architect, A.I.A.) of Roger Williams College. Student team supervisor was Steven Phillips. The Longfield house was measured in the fall of 1979 by Steven Phillips, Monica Letourneau, Bart Bauer, Richard Wood, Steven Pecchio, Howard Farman and Laura Barbeau. The measured drawings were drafted by Steven Phillips, Steve Pecchio, Monica Letourneau, Bart Bauer and Richard Wood. The authors of the historical and architectural report were Laura Barbeau, Julia Sniderman and Monica Letourneau. Documentary photography was done by Laura Barbeau and Julia Sniderman.